Restoration, when the revulsion of feeling created a passion for the basest defamation, and unduly magnified the small defects of etiquette, behavior, and dress in the preceding regime.* The scraps of evidence which these writings afford ought to be carefully examined, and viewed from the standpoint of the circumstances which produced them. Such a task being well-nigh hopeless, the deeds of the First Consul must speak for him rather than the statements about them and him which he himself and others have made. He was not in touch with the polite society of Paris; he certainly did most arbitrarily banish from its precincts Mme. de Stael, the brilliant woman whose writings many praise but few now read, and whose home was the focus for the discontented ability of the time; he never appreciated the spirit of true liberty, and he often misapprehended the gentler spirits who in its name sought his powerful protection and patronage; he was not sensitive to the finer sentiments of the mind, often mocking at the "ideologues"; and while he enjoyed the society of Josephine and her friends, he repelled their interference with his plans, and apparently never forgot that her jealous devotion had grown with his power and reputation. All this must be admitted in characterizing Bonaparte at the height of his greatness; but the vile innuendos, insinuations, and imputations of sordid traits, which so abound in the diaries of the time, must be considered in relation to the murky natures of those who recorded them, and, with allowances for the time and the training of the man, may be consigned to the limbo of malice from which they came.

Exile had broken the spirit but had neither softened the hearts nor enlightened the minds of the long-banished aristocracy and their friends. The new society looked on the thousands and thousands of returned